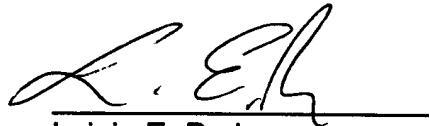


Early and favorable consideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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Encl: Marked Version

MARKED VERSION

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please add the following new claims:

- -32. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising adding bentonite to the particulate material.

33. (New) The method of claim 32, wherein the amount of bentonite is up to about 0.22%.

34. (New) The method of claim 9, further comprising adding bentonite to the particulate material.

35. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein the amount of bentonite is up to about 0.22%.

36. (New) The method of claim 18, further comprising adding bentonite to the particulate material.

37. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein the amount of bentonite is up to about 0.22%.

38. (New) The method of claim 25, further comprising adding bentonite to the particulate material.

39. (New) The method of claim 38, wherein the amount of bentonite is up to about 0.22%.

40. (New) A method for agglomerating particulate material comprising:
adding to the particulate material a binding effective amount of an inorganic binder

and sodium citrate; and
forming the particulate material into agglomerates.

41. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the inorganic binder is bentonite.
42. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the particulate material is a metal containing ore.
43. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the metal containing ore is iron ore.
44. (New) The method of claim 40, further comprising adding to the particulate material sodium carbonate and caustic.
45. (New) A method for agglomerating particulate material comprising:
chelating interfering elements in or on the particulate material;
adding to the particulate material a binding effective amount of an inorganic binder; and
forming the particulate material into agglomerates.
46. (New) The method of claim 45, wherein the inorganic binder is bentonite.
47. (New) The method of claim 45, wherein the step of chelating includes adding to the particulate material sodium citrate, tetra-sodium EDTA, ether sequestering agents, oxalates, or mixtures thereof.
48. (New) The method of claim 45, wherein the step of chelating includes adding sodium citrate to the particulate material and the inorganic binder is bentonite.
49. (New) The method of claim 45, wherein the particulate material is a metal containing ore.

50. (New) The method of claim 49, wherein the metal containing ore is iron ore.

51. (New) The method of claim 45, further comprising adding to the particulate material sodium carbonate and caustic.

52. (New) The method of claim 45, wherein the interfering elements are sulfur, manganese, ferrous hydroxides, Ca^{2+} ions, Mg^{2+} ions or mixtures thereof. -